

**TOWN OF DARIEN
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 6, 2013**

ATTENDANCE: Jayme Stevenson, First Selectman; Christopher (Kip) Hall, Susan J. Marks, Gerald Nielsen, E. Reilly Tierney

STAFF: Karl Kilduff, Administrative Officer

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectman Stevenson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

PRESENTATION from the Darien Board of Education Regarding the Potential Acquisition of the Property Located at 32 Hoyt Street.

First Selectman Stevenson gave a brief introduction of the item and reminded everyone that the Board had been considering the acquisition of this parcel for over a year.

Ms. Betsy Hagerty-Ross, the Board of Education Chairman, Dr. Pierson, the Interim Superintendent of Schools and Mr. Michael Lynch were present to discuss this matter. Ms. Hagerty-Ross said that the BOE had been considering this particular parcel for many years because it is located right next to Holmes School. Safety and security are primary concerns for future planning.

Dr. Pierson then came forward and said that this .23 acre property would fit well in relationship to the Holmes Elementary School. Mr. Lynch then indicated where the parcel was located on a map and explained how the current traffic patterns presented a safety hazard. He also indicated the set back lines on the parcel.

Dr. Pierson said that there were two primary reasons that they felt the purchase of the property was essential. She indicated where the students, staff and parents enter the property and where the bus traffic goes. There are a substantial number of elementary students at Holmes who are walkers. This increases the number of pedestrians moving along the sidewalks to and from the building.

Because the school has no control over the residential traffic, the school has very strict rules regarding pedestrian traffic. There have been problems in the past.

Secondly, this small parcel will provide more flexibility to the Board of Education. Milone and MacBroom will be evaluating the usage of all the schools and this will be

included in the analysis of the increasing enrollment. The acquisition of this parcel will provide long term possibilities.

First Selectman Stevenson said that there would be an opportunity to have a Board of Selectman discussion later in the meeting. She asked if anyone had questions for the BOE or the administration.

Mr. Lynch was asked if he had sense of how much land that is owned by the Town surrounds this parcel. Mr. Lynch replied that there was sixty (60) feet between the edge of the building and property line. He indicated where this was on the map.

Mr. Lynch was then asked if there were any zoning set backs involved if it was decided to build on the parcel. An overlay was displayed showing the 5.5 acre school parcel and the proposed parcel for purchase. Mr. Lynch indicated where the property lines were. He was then asked about the grade of the parcel. Mr. Lynch replied that the ground sloped down quite a bit and indicated where this was on the map. There are some wetlands on the parcel and gave a rough indication of where these were located.

First Selectman Stevenson thanked the BOE staff for attending the meeting.

FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT.

First Selectman Stevenson announced the retirement of Susan Swiatek, the Parks and Recreation Director, after twenty five years of service. Her hard work is evident at McGuane Park, Weed Beach, Cherry Lawn Park and the Senior Center. Mr. Jim Coghlan has been appointed as Interim Director.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT.

Mr. Kilduff reported that the Hazardous Material Report for the former Senior Center on Edgerton has been scheduled for the coming week. This will help with determining the cost of demolishing the building.

Today was the deadline for the Downtown Parking Study RFP. Two submissions have been received. These are currently under staff review and then be moved to committees.

PUBLIC COMMENT.

Mr. Kilduff was asked regarding the HazMat study, if he had an idea as to when the work would start. He explained that the first stage would take place within the coming week and this would mostly be lab work to identify the extent of the hazardous materials. Then there will be demolition specification and the project scope will be done.

First Selectman Stevenson asked if there were Holmes School parents in the audience. She then thanked them for their attendance at the meeting and the numerous emails that the Board members received regarding their support of the parcel acquisition.

NEW BUSINESS.

**** MR. HALL MOVED TO CONSIDER AGENDA ITEM 6B NEXT.**

**** MR. NIELSEN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Discuss and Take Action on Request for a Special Appropriation from Sewer Fund for Sewer Pump Replacements.

Mr. Gentile, the Director of Public Works, came forward to review the information regarding the Sewer Pumps as outlined in the October 2, 2014 memo in the information packet with the Board Members. The funds will be moved into a new Capital Account for the Pump Stations Upgrades. A brief discussion regarding the details then followed.

A question was asked regarding the balance in the Sewer Fund Balance account. Mr. Gentile gave a brief overview of the sewer use fees and how the Capital funding is used. Mr. Gentile was asked if this was the type of repair that the Fund Balance was created for. He replied that he believed this was so. He was then asked the reason he was reluctant to use the funds. Mr. Gentile explained that he would prefer to have some funds set aside in case something goes wrong with the pump stations and gave some examples of recent issues.

First Selectman Stevenson commented that even though the package documentation states that the system can handle wipes and swifers, she requested that the residents don't do this.

Another brief discussion followed about the details.

**** MS. MARKS MOVED THE FOLLOWING:**

RESOLVED: THAT THE FOLLOWING TRANSFER OF APPROPRIATIONS IS APPROVED FOR REFERRAL TO THE BOARD OF FINANCE:

FROM:

TO:

Acct Number	Account Name	Amount	Acct Number	Account Name	Amount
240-31620	Sewer Fund Balance	\$200,000.00	TBD	TBD	\$200,000.00
	Desg for Capt Equip				

TOTAL

\$200,000.00

TOTAL

\$200,000.00

**** THERE WAS A SECOND.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH TWO IN FAVOR AND ONE ABSTENTION.**

Discuss and Take Action on Resolution Approving the Purchase of a Property Located at 32 Hoyt Street as Requested by the Board of Education and Referral of Same to the Board of Finance and the Representative Town Meeting.

First Selectman Stevenson said that there were representatives from the Board of Finance and the Representative Town Meeting present in the audience and that she appreciated their presence.

She reminded the general public that this property actually was up for acquisition in the 1990's while Holmes was undergoing its last upgrades. The negotiations fell through and the Town was not able to acquire the property. Now the parcel is up for sale and the Town has the opportunity to acquire it, which would be extremely prudent. This is very similar to another situation at Short Lane where there was an island of private property surrounded by Town owned land. This is fully consistent with the Town Plan of Conservation and Development. It may provide more flexibility for Malone and MacBroom facility.

Ms. Marks said that she remembered the previous presentation in 1994. Back then, Ms. Marks was involved in the group asking the Selectmen if they would allow the Board of Education to use four classrooms at Hollow Tree. She said that the school parents had received letters from the Board of Selectmen in reply.

Ms. Marks said that the emails that she had received regarding this potential purchase were very thoughtful and she appreciated all those who came out to the meeting in support of the resolution tonight. This is just the first step in the process and the resolution will go to the Board of Finance next. She said that she was fully supportive of the issue.

One of the Selectmen said that he was pleased to see the unanimous approval the proposal had received.

Another Selectmen commented that he was in favor of the item, also. He felt that the survey did it justice and the Town should acquire the parcel since it was surrounded by Town owned land. There are safety concerns and these should be addressed by purchasing the property.

The final Selectman said that he would be supporting it whole heartedly because the First Selectman negotiated price well and secondly, the chance to purchase the property comes along very infrequently. There will be potential projects in conjunction with the study and it is a strategic investment for the Town.

First Selectman Stevenson said that she would like to make a statement similar to the one that she made in the Rules Committee a few weeks earlier.

“The Board of Selectmen has hear you in relations to getting spending in the Town of Darien in check and we are making good progress in doing what we can on the municipal side to do that in the coming budget cycle. I will, however, remind everyone that land acquisition opportunities, particularly opportunities that have been in the forefront of the Town Plan and would have been obviously advantageous to the Town for decades, shouldn’t be passed up. I think that the Town may have had a history of doing so in the past and I’m hoping that we can change that through our acquisition of Short Lane and hopefully our acquisition of this parcel at 32 Hoyt Street.

Just for disclosure because you are here and as we are going on through the process, I’ve been able to negotiate a purchase price for this property of \$775,000. The original listing price was just under \$900,000 when it originally came on the market and I feel that we have – we are lucky that we have come to an agreement with the seller. I am pleased that I have been able to have negotiated that price. It’s a lot of money, but I think it is going to be well worth it in the long run.”

First Selectman Stevenson then read the following into the record:

**RESOLUTION APPROVING OF THE PURCHASE OF PROPERTY LOCATED
AT 32 HOYT STREET AS REQUESTED BY THE DARIEN BOAR OF
EDUCATION FOR THE PRICE OF \$775,000 AND REFERRAL OF SAME
TO THE BOARD OF FINANCE AND THE REPRESENTATIVE
TOWN MEETING.**

**WHEREAS, THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 32 HOYT STREET IS
COMPLETELY SURROUNDED BY DARIEN BOARD OF EDUCATION
PROPERTY USED FOR HOLMES SCHOOL; AND**

**WHEREAS, THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED A
RESPONSE FROM THE DARIEN PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION ON
A MANDATORY REFERRAL DATE OCTOBER 11, 2013 REGARDING THE
SITE; AND**

**WHEREAS, THE ACQUISITION OF THIS SITE IS IN KEEPING WITH THE
2006 TOWN OF DARIEN PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AS
THE SITE IS CONTIGUOUS TO OTHER TOWN-OWNED PROPERTY; AND**

**WHEREAS, PURCHASE OF THIS PROPERTY PRESENTS FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AT HOLMES SCHOOL;
AND**

WHEREAS, DARIEN BOARD OF EDUCATION HAS ENDORSED THE ACQUISITION OF 32 HOYT STREET; AND

WHEREAS, THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN WISHES TO ACT AT THE REQUEST OF THE DARIEN BOARD OF EDUCATION TO ACQUIRE 32 HOYT STREET WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT OWNING SAID PROPERTY IS IN THE LONG-TERM INTEREST OF THE TOWN OF DARIEN AND MAY BE NEEDED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION FOR ITS FUTURE FACILITY NEEDS.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, THE DARIEN BOARD OF SELECTMEN HEREBY APPROVE OF THE PURCHASE OF 32 HOYT STREET FOR THE NEGOTIATED PURCHASE PRICE OF \$775,000 AND REFER THE SAME TO THE BOARD OF FINANCE FOR ACTION ON THE FINANCING OF THIS PURCHASE.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, THE DARIEN BOARD OF SELECTMEN REFER THE PURCHASE OF 32 HOYT STREET FOR THE NEGOTIATED PURCHASE PRICE OF \$775,000 TO THE REPRESENTATIVE TOWN MEETING FOR FINAL ACTION WITH A RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE OF SAID ACQUISITION AND FINANCING RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE.

First Selectman Stevenson added that the Board of Education had called earlier in the day to remind her that the demolition and hazardous abatement at Short Lane, which is a comparable property, and they are looking at the costs and potential use of funds.

**** A MOTION WAS MADE TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION.**

**** THERE WAS A SECOND.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

AGENDA REVIEW.

There was no items to review at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS.

Special Meeting of September 29, 2014.

**** MR. HALL MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 29, 2014.**

**** MR. NIELSEN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 29, 2014 AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

October 7, 2014	Joint Department Heads Meeting at 8:30 A.M.
October 7, 2014	Planning and Zoning Commission Regular Meeting at 8:00 P.M.
October 14, 2014	Board of Education Regular Meeting at 7:30 P.M.
October 14, 2014	Planning and Zoning Commission Regular Meeting at 8:00 P.M.
October 20, 2014	Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting at 7:00 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT.

**** MR. NIELSEN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MR. HALL SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services